

TO THE ACADEMIC JURY

in the competition for the academic position of “Associate Professor” at the Faculty of Law of Plovdiv University “Paisii Hilendarski”, in the field of higher education 3. Social, Economic and Legal Sciences, professional field 3.6. Law (History of State and Law), announced in State Gazette No. 31/11.04.2025

OPINION

by assoc. prof. Dimitar Valkov Hanev, PhD,

Faculty of Law at Plovdiv University “Paisii Hilendarski”

regarding

the selection of a candidate among those admitted to the competition

Dear Members of the Academic Jury,

By Order No. RD-22-1349/11.06.2025 of the Rector of Paisii Hilendarski University of Plovdiv, I was appointed as a member of the academic jury in the competition for the academic position of “Associate Professor” in the field of History of State and Law, announced in State Gazette No. 31/11.04.2025. By decision of the jury at its first meeting, I was tasked with preparing an opinion

regarding the selection of a candidate among those admitted to the competition, which opinion I hereby present within the officially prescribed deadline.

I. Candidates Admitted to the Competition

Within this procedure only one candidate has been admitted to the competition – Desislava Vasileva Stoyankova.

Desislava Stoyankova holds a Bachelor's degree in the field of Bulgarian Language and History and a Master's degree in Law, both from Plovdiv University “Paisii Hilendarski”. In 2010 she began working as a part-time lecturer in History of the Bulgarian State and Law at the Faculty of Law of the same university. Since 2013 she has served as an Assistant Professor and later Senior Assistant Professor, and in 2015 she earned her PhD in Law. She has working knowledge of Russian and English.

II. Details on Formal Compliance with the Legal Requirements for the Academic Position

For her participation in the competition, the candidate has submitted a set of materials in both paper and electronic format in accordance with the requirements of Art. 66, para. 2 of the Rules for the Development of the Academic Staff at Paisii Hilendarski University, certifying compliance with the statutory requirements for the position of “Associate Professor,” which respectively are set out in Art. 24, para. 1 of the Act on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria. This provision establishes four statutory criteria: Possession of the educational and scientific degree of “Doctor” (PhD); Possession of prior professional experience; Possession of scientific output in accordance with the minimum national requirements under Art. 2b of the Law; Absence of plagiarism or falsification of presented scientific results.

1. Regarding the criterion of possessing the educational and scientific degree of “Doctor,” the candidate has presented diplomas for Master’s degree and PhD in professional field 3.6 Law, thus meeting the statutory requirement.

2. Regarding the criterion of professional experience, it is certified that the candidate has held the academic positions of Assistant Professor and Senior Assistant Professor from 2013 to the present, which satisfies Art. 24, para. 1, item 2 of the Law.

3. Regarding the criterion of possessing scientific output in line with the minimum national requirements under Art. 2b, the candidate has presented:

- a habilitation work;
- a book based on the defended PhD thesis;
- three articles published in non-refereed scientific journals with peer review and edited collective volumes.

Apart, the candidate has also provided data on citations in accordance with the relevant scientometric requirements.

As a whole materials provided in the procedure show that the third criterion is also formally met.

4. Regarding the criterion about absence of plagiarism or falsification of scientific results, there is no information suggesting any irregularities.

III. Evaluation of Professional Suitability of the Candidates Based on of Their Scientific Results

Regarding professional suitability (*habilis*, Lat. – suitable, capable), the Law requires that candidates be evaluated based on their scientific results in relation to the minimum national requirements under Art. 2b, after which a ranking is to be made (Art. 27a, para. 1 in connection with Art. 27, para. 3). Since in this procedure there is only one candidate, determining professional suitability

can be reduced to evaluating the compliance of the presented scientific work with the minimum national requirements

1. Indicator “A”

The candidate has certified the defense of a PhD thesis entitled “Razlog Legal Monument from the 19th Century.”

2. Indicator “C”

The candidate has presented a habilitation work – a monograph entitled *“State Organs in Bulgarian Constitutions – National Assembly, Council of Ministers, Head of State 1879–1991. Legal-Historical Analysis”*.

The book is a legal-historical study of the state-forming constitutional bodies of the modern Bulgarian state from its inception to 1991. In the monograph, the constitutional regulation concerning the National Assembly, the Council of Ministers, and the Head of State is chronologically, contextually, and institutionally examined within the framework of the Constitutions of 1879, 1947, and 1971, Apart that, references to the current constitutional framework is also available. Such a systematic study of the subject has not previously existed in Bulgarian academia, which supports the contribution and habilitation character of the work. The author applies a clear methodology and adheres to a consistent system of views, combining historical and legal analysis.

Technically, the book meets the definition of a monograph as provided in item 10 of § 1 of the Additional Provisions of the ADASRB. It has two academic reviewers, an ISBN, a detailed table of contents, an exhaustive bibliography, footnote citations of other scholarly works, and a volume far exceeding the required 100 pages. For these reasons, the habilitation work fulfills the criteria under indicator “B.”

At the same time, from the perspective of the academic standards, some critical remarks should be made.

In my view, despite the stated analytical framework of the study, factual description and synthesizing prevail. Considering the scope of the monograph, greater emphasis should have been placed on political and legal theory on one hand, and on the legal doctrine of constitutional law on the other, as these ought to serve as the starting point and foundation for the author's analytical conclusions.

The book also contains some technical, terminological, and systematic inaccuracies such as unclear expressions, misspelled words, structural inconsistencies etc., for example:

- “Berlin Congress” instead of “Berlin Treaty” – p. 9;
- “...on the basis of the adopted constitutional.” – p. 90 (the meaning of the sentence remains unfinished and unclear);
- “The initial draft of the Bulgarian constitution provided for the introduction of a bicameral system – the Grand National Assembly and the Ordinary National Assembly...” – p. 43 (misspelling of “bicameral” in Bulgarian and factually unclear meaning as a whole);
- On pp. 122–124 a comparison is made between the powers of the Grand National Assembly under the Constitutions of 1879 and 1991, whereas the broader structure (§ 2.4.2 (p. 119) under which text is submitted is entitled “Comparative analysis of the powers of the National Assembly in the Tarnovo Constitution of 1879, the Constitution of the People’s Republic of Bulgaria of 1947, and the Constitution of the People’s Republic of Bulgaria of 1971.”

It is advisable that in potential future editions of the book these issues be corrected.

3. Group of Indicators “D”

The candidate has presented:

- A book based on her defended PhD thesis entitled “*Razlog Legal Monument from the 19th Century*” (Stoyankova, D. *Razlog Legal Monument from the 19th Century*. Plovdiv: Paisii Hilendarski University Press, 2024).
- Three articles published in non-refereed scientific journals with peer review and edited collective volumes:
 - Stoyankova, D. *Socio-political Factors in the Adoption of the Constitution of the Republic of Bulgaria*. In: *Studia Iuris*, Faculty of Law at PU, No. 2, 2021, pp. 90–98.
 - Stoyankova, D. *The National Assembly in the Bulgarian Constitutions*. In: *30 Years Faculty of Law of UNWE – Successor of a Century-old Tradition in Legal Science and Practice*, Sofia: UNWE, 2022, pp. 108–125.
 - Stoyankova, D. *On the Law on Obligations and Contracts of 1892*. In: *70 Years Law on Obligations and Contracts*. Plovdiv: Paisii Hilendarski University Press, 2022, pp. 54–66.

The materials presented under Group of Indicators “D” meet the statutory requirements.

4. Group of Indicators “E”

The candidate has listed citations of her publications that meet the minimum national requirements.

IV. Conclusion

Dear Members of the Academic Jury,
In view of the above, pursuant to Chapter Three, Sections I and III, and in accordance with Art. 24, para. 1 of the Act on the Development of the Academic

Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria and its implementing regulations, I give a positive assessment of the candidacy of Dr. Desislava Vasileva Stoyankova in this competition. I recommend that the academic jury adopt a decision to propose to the Faculty Council of the Faculty of Law of PU to elect her to the position of “Associate Professor” in the field of higher education 3. Social, Economic and Legal Sciences, professional field 3.6. Law (History of State and Law).

10 August 2025

Assoc. Prof. Dimitar Hanev, PhD